for the year 1995-96 and for the current period April-Dec. 1996 are as under:

(US $ Million)

1995-96	$ 31797
1995-96(April-Dec.)	$ 22757
1996-97(April-Dec.)	24205

(c) Export Promotion measures are continuously being taken by the Government through changes in policies & procedures for providing an export friendly environment, involvement of States in export promotion and in consultation with Trade and Industry.

Move to Scrap Sugar Act

150. SHRI OP. KOHLI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news appeared in the Indian Express dated January 10, 1997 under the caption "Move to scrap Sugar Act may deal a severe blow to exports"; and

(b) it so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Sugar Export Promotion (Repeal) Ordinance, 1997 was promulgated with a view to enable a larger number of parties to participate in the export of sugar.

Export of Leather Goods

151. SHRI P. SOUNDARAJAN:
SHRI N. THALAVAISUNDARAM:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have liberalised loan facilities for the export of leather goods;

(b) whether it is a fact that for loan beyond six months over 15% interest is charged by Government; and

(c) whether Government have any scheme for providing financial assistance to the leather processing houses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULK RAMAIAH): (a) Credit facilities are pirovided to the exporters of leather goods at par with other exporters under various schemes of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) at pre-shipment and post-shipment stages both in rupee and foreign currency. The interest rates of post shipment rupee credit have been rationalised from 21.10.1996.

(b) As per Reserve Bank of India instructions, the current interest rates on post shipment rupee credit are as follows:

(i) Upto 90 days—13%

(ii) Beyond 90 days and upto 6 months- from the date of shipment 15%

(iii) Beyond 6 months from the date of shipment—Free. (Banks are free to determine the rate of interest)

(e) For setting up of Common Effluent Treatment Plants by Tanneries, Central and State Govts, provide 25% each of the total cost of plant. Loan is also provided by the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) for setting up of Common Effluent Treatment Plants.

निर्यात संवर्धन संबंधी नीति

152. **श्री इकबाल सिंह :** क्या वाणिज्य मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार ने देश के निर्यातकों में तीव्र वृद्धि के लिए कोई व्यापक नीति तैयार की हैं :

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या हैं:

(ग) यदि हां, तो उसके क्या कारण हैं, और

(ग) सरकार द्वारा निर्यात संवर्धन के लिए उठाए जा रहे कारगर और ठोस कदमों का ब्यौरा क्या हैं?

वाधिज्य मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (डा. बोला बुल्ली रमैया) : (क) से (घ) दिनांक 1-4-1992 को घोषित वर्तमान निर्यात-आयात नीति 31 मार्च, 1997 तक वैध हैं। मात्रात्मक प्रतिबंधों, लाइसेंस तथा अन्य विवेकाधीन नियंत्रणों को धीरे-धीरे समाप्त करने के लिए नीतियों और क्रियाविधियों की वार्षिक समीक्षा स्थायी नीतिगत ढांचे के अंतर्गत ही की जाती हैं ताकि निर्यातों को बढ़ाने के उद्देश्य से व्यापार के लिए मुक्त वातावरण तैयार किया जा सके।

चूंकि नीति के समीक्षा एक सतत प्रक्रिया हैं जो सम्बन्धित प्रशासिनक मंत्रालयों तथा व्यापार और उघोग के परामर्श से की जाती हैं। अत: ऐसी प्रस्ताव है कि निर्यातों को तेजी से बढ़ाने की आवश्यकता को ध्यान में रखते हुए नौवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना अवधि के लिए निर्यात तथा आयात नीति तैयार करते समय निर्यात और आयात नीति में विस्तार से दी गई विभिन्न निर्यात संवर्धम स्कीमों को और सरल तथा युक्तिसंगत जाए।

Negotiation for Import of Wheat

153. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have held discussions with foreign countries for import of wheat to augment stocks and check it's prices;

(b) if so, the details of the discussions held; and

(c) the quantity and value of wheat to be imported, alongwith the names of the countries and its purchase price from foreign countries and sale price to consumers in the country, per kilogram?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULI RAMAIAH): (a) to (c) In view of the fall in production of wheat, and the consequent shortfall in procurement of wheat during 1996-97, and increasing trend in the prices of wheat and wheat products in the domestic market, the Government decided to import upto 2 million tonnes of wheat to augment availability in the country. The State Trading Corporation was asked to take steps to import the authorised quantity. The STC has already contracted for import of 16.75 lakh tonnes of wheat from Australia, Canada and Argentina as per details given below:—

(Quantity in lakh tonnes)

Name of Country	Quantity contracted	Rate in US$ per tonne
Australia	10.00	148.00 FOB
Australia	3.25	156.00 FOB
Canada	2.50	152.50 FOB
Argentina	1.00	173.00 C&F

The imported wheat stocks will form part of the Central Pool stocks to be utilised for distribution under Public Distribution System and other Welfare Schemes as well as Open Sale for domestic use at prices applicable under each scheme. The present Central Issue Price of wheat under PDS is Rs. 402 per quintal and Rs. 352 for Revamped PDS. For Open Market Sales, the prices vary from State to State. The end retails prices to consumers are fixed by the State Governmcnts/UTs taking into account transportation costs, incidentals etc.

Trade with South-East Asian Countries

154. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased io state:

(a) whether Government have taken up any measures for improving trade and commerce with South-East Asian countries;

(b) if so, the measures taken in this regard;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the value of imports and exports to the South-East Asian countries and Western countries on contry-wise basis?